



2014

Making strange: Risk, design & foresight

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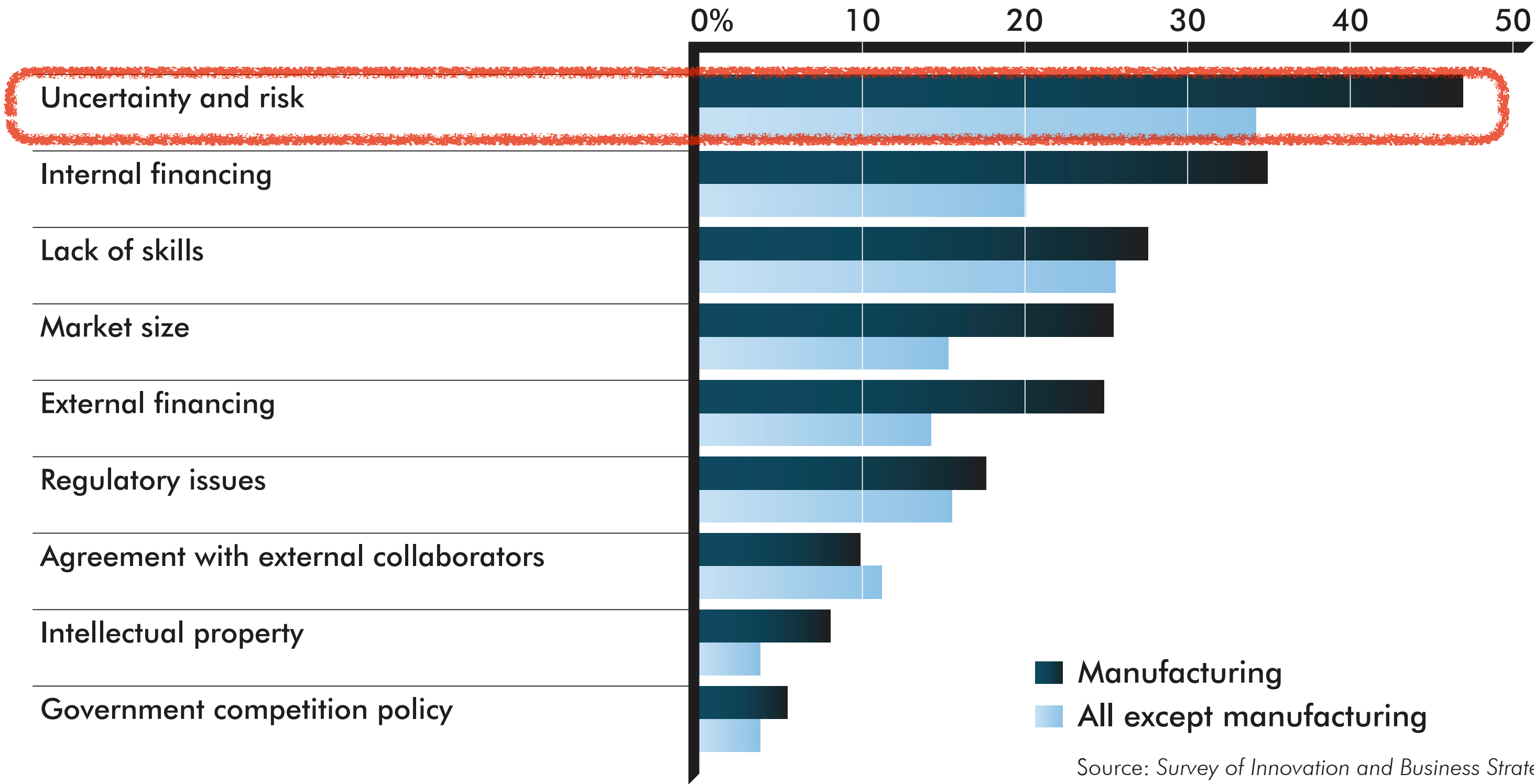
Making Strange: Risk, Design & Foresight

Intergovernmental Forum on Risk Management
Ottawa, Canada 1–2 October 2014

Greg Van Alstyne

Strategic Innovation Lab (sLab)
OCAD University

What are the biggest obstacles to innovation?



Source: Survey of Innovation and Business Strategy, 2009.

What is innovation?

Is it a new technology?

Is it a process?

An outcome?

What is innovation?

“An idea, practice or object that is **perceived as new** by an individual or other unit of adoption”

—Rogers, [1962] 2005, *Diffusion of Innovations* [emphasis added]

“Creating a new paradigm...
changing the rules and
changing the game”

—Dubberly et al. 2007. *A Model of Innovation*
dubberly.com/concept-maps/innovation.html

Innovation means novelty, creativity, risk. Yet risk is seen as an obstacle.

What gives rise to this situation?

“Uncertainty today is not just an occasional, temporary deviation from a reasonable predictability; it is a basic structural feature of the business environment.”

—Pierre Wack, 1985



So how does your organization deal with risk & uncertainty?

Ambiguity and risk perception

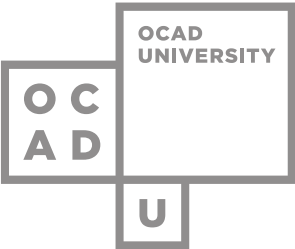
There is no perception
without interpretation

—Gadamer 1960; Kihlstrom 2002

“Ambiguity effect”:
Cognitive bias describing
our tendency to avoid
options for which
missing information
makes the probability
seem “unknown”

quick exercise

The next slide is ambiguous.
What is the *meaning* of this scene?



Ambiguity



Q: Which practices deal creatively with ambiguity & risk? A: art & design



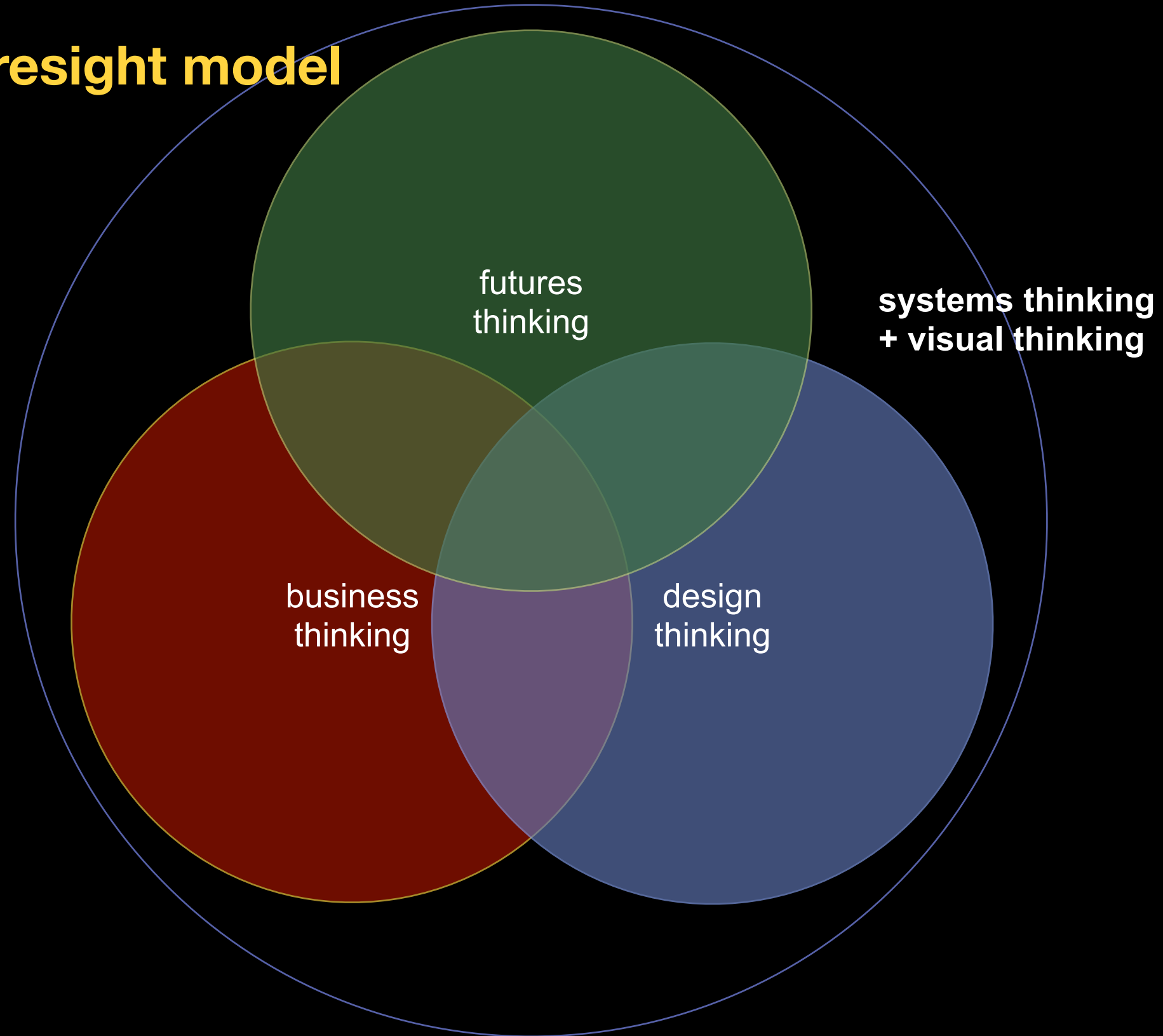
sLab is “human centred”

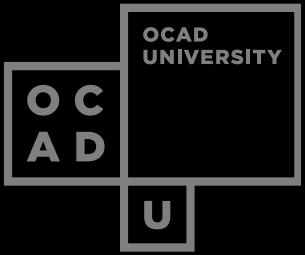
We place human needs, desires,
behaviour and culture at the heart
of the process

Our process may be seen as:

problem finding	foresight
problem framing	strategy
problem solving	design

sLab design & foresight model





Master of Design in Strategic Foresight & Innovation (SFI)

A new kind of designer — a changemaker. Mapping and tackling complexity.
Shaping positive futures, designing responsibly. Understanding change, Leading innovation

Master of Design in Strategic Foresight & Innovation (SFI)

OCAD U's largest grad program

120 students by Fall 2014

Rapid growth

New courses and faculty

Industry partnerships

International enrollment

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Pakistan

Leading employers

Bridgepoint Health

BMO Private Client Group

CAMH

Green Living Enterprises

Government of Alberta

Monitor Deloitte

Idea Couture

Leo Burnett

Mayo Clinic

Startups / rebrandings

Art & Science

The Mission Business

Perceptual.com

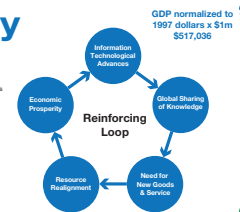
ZanCom Media

We map ambiguity & complexity

Protecting Canadians & Vulnerable Workers in a Global Economy

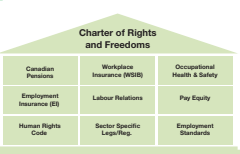
Economy

Reinforcing Incomes Responsible for Economic Growth
Technological advances and information technology allow for greater sharing and applying of knowledge and research globally. Exposure to global ideas creates demand for new goods and services, resulting resources to be realigned to various economic growth.



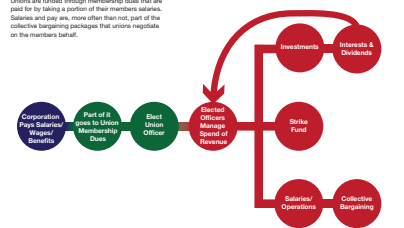
Demographic

Workers Protection Architecture
Canada has built up an impressive foundation of laws and regulations designed to protect workers. Stemming from the Charter of Rights and Freedoms the Federal Government and Provincial Governments have an array of laws designed to protect workers. These laws range from the Occupational Health and Safety Act that prescribes safe working conditions, Pay Equity laws to reduce gender and immigrant gaps in wages and conditions and Labour Relations laws outlining that, applicable and neutral process of labour arbitration.



Unions

Union Funding and Spending Cycle
Unions and similar through membership dues that are paid for by taking a portion of their members salaries. Salaries and pay are, more often than not, part of the collective bargaining package that unions negotiate on the members behalf.



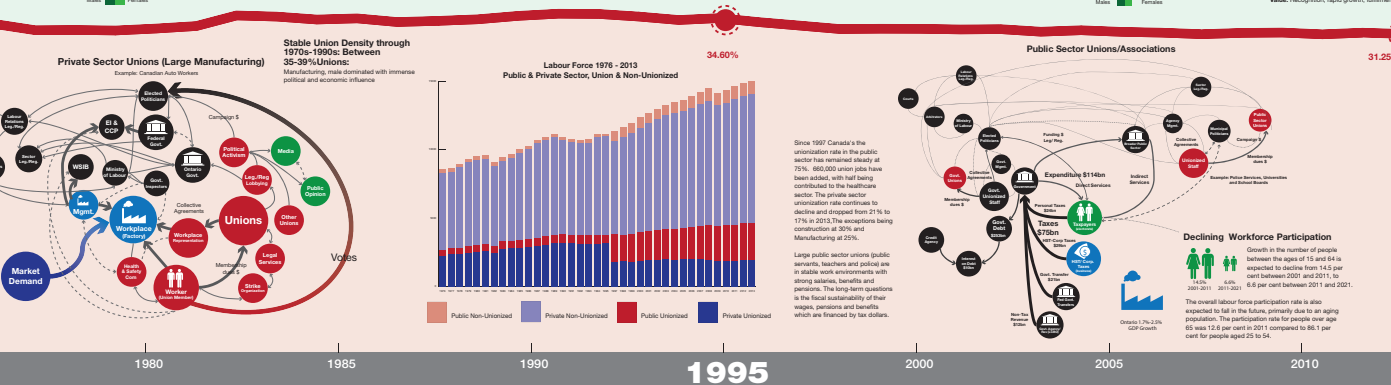
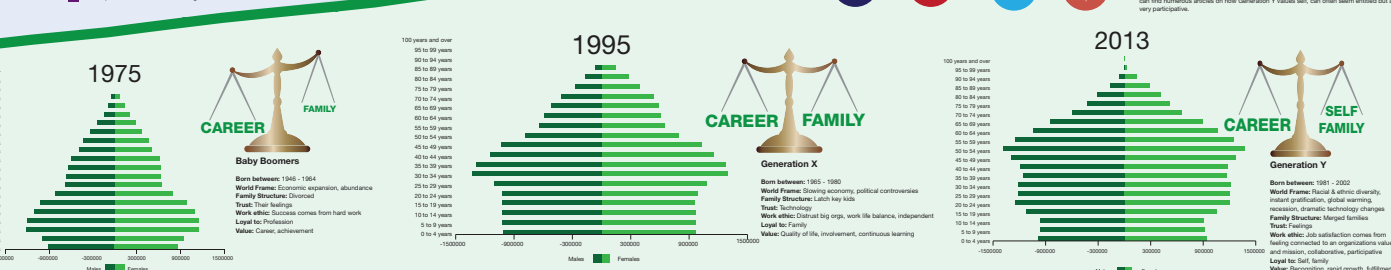
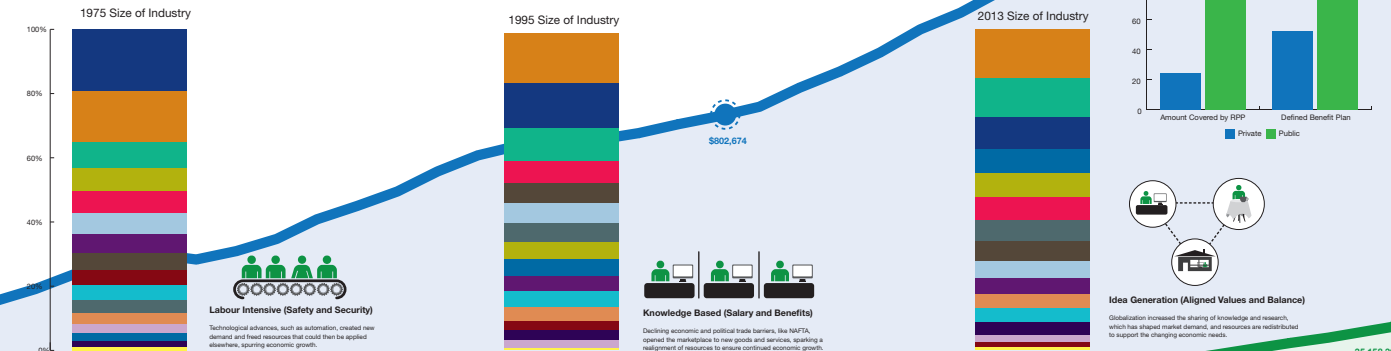
Since 1975, Canada's economy, workplaces and people have change immeasurably. Globalization has driven trade but has also led to the manufacturing sector's decline: the mainstay of the nation's post-war economy. Increasingly, the service based economy, Canada has seen a fundamental shift in the nature of work, types of employment and diversity of workplaces. Gone is the factory floor, replaced by more part time, casual and even precarious jobs.

As work has changed, so has women's participation in the workforce, cultural diversity driven by immigration and attitudes of different generations in the workplace. These generational attitudes are reshaping how workers connect and value jobs. The post-war Baby Boomer generation

driven by certainty, and now increasingly focused on retirement, is being replaced by a far younger Generation Y who expects to have multiple jobs and even careers. The stable job with defined benefits is increasingly the preserve of public sector workers. Increasingly, the private sector is fragmenting into a few large employers and small to medium businesses where most new immigrants, contractors, young people, semi-skilled and vulnerable workers earn a living. Traditionally, Unions rooted in a given industry gave workers the collective strength to negotiate: better wages, pensions and benefits; improved, safer conditions; and to organize their political muscle to advocate for greater workplace protections. Union membership is on the decline. Although, many laws have

been passed to support and protect workers, like unions they have challenges responding to a new economy with a fragmented, dispersed and isolated workforce.

These fears in the legal and collective architecture designed to protect workers means that there are serious gaps where young, immigrant and semi-skilled workers can be subject to exploitation, unsafe conditions and be "wage poor". Having rights is a start but being able to exercise those rights is the key, this gigamap is designed to provoke dialogue amongst labour activists to find creative and flexible solutions to enable all Canadians to work in decent, safe and protected workplaces.

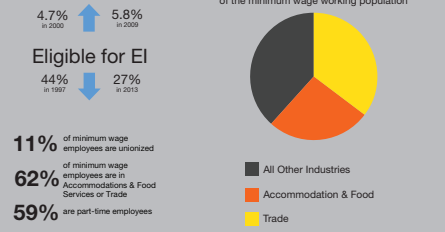


Wicked Problem

2015 Onwards: Fragmented Work, New Sectors and a Service Economy
Wicked problem: With a globalized (service) economy, changing generations, how to create a strong yet flexible workers' protection where unions (and other social organizations) play a key role in ensuring the betterment of part-time, contract, low-pay and the most vulnerable workers.

Workforce Making Minimum Wage
4.7% in 2000 ↑ 5.8% in 2009
Eligible for EI 44% in 1997 ↓ 27% in 2013

Total Employees on Minimum Wage
Trade and Accommodations & Food represent 61% of the minimum wage working population



What kind of legal, policy, organizational and social protections need to be strengthened (possibly enabled by technology) to provide pathways out of low-pay into careers, and to improve working conditions, pay and conditions for isolated, dispersed and vulnerable/young workers.

Gen Y: Unemployed & Underemployed
Generation Y is the largest demographic cohort to come after the baby boomers and they make up more than 1/3 of Canada's population. They are also the most educated and most diverse generation in history, and the first to have more women than men obtain postsecondary education credentials.

However, as they started to enter the workforce between 1996 and 2017 they found it hard to find jobs and many are currently unemployed or underemployed (an employee that has education, experience, or skills beyond the requirements of the job).

Part of the reason is because Baby Boomers are delaying retirement for a number of reasons: their work-hard mentality, but mainly due to financial concerns because the recession impacted their retirement funds.

Sometimes referred to as the "Civic Generation", 62% of Gen Y approve of Unions, while only 5% are able to participate in union membership.

Values are not passed sequentially, they leapfrog
People often assume that values are passed on from one cohort to the next but values are actually passed on in a leaping sequence because it takes time for a generation to reach parenting age. For example, Baby Boomers were typically controlling and so the consequences of that in their children, Generation X, were to be more rebellious. Alternatively, Baby Boomers gave their children, Generation Y, everything they could, and then they could be anything they wanted and taught them to be collaborative. And so you can find numerous articles on how Generation Y values will, can often seem entitled but are very participative.

Globalization increased the sharing of knowledge and research, which has shaped market demand, and resources are reallocated to support the changing economic needs.

Idea Generation (Aligned Values and Balance)

Declining economic and political trade barriers, like NAFTA, opened the marketplace to new goods and services, spurring a realignment of resources to ensure continued economic growth.

Labour Intensive (Safety and Security)

Knowledge Based (Salary and Benefits)

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Design thinking is about *sensemaking*, isn't it?

Designers excel at coaching, practicing, and theorizing how to make sense of complex or ambiguous situations & information.

Yet sometimes what is needed is not sensemaking. Sometimes what is needed is ***strangemaking***.

That's where **foresight** comes in.

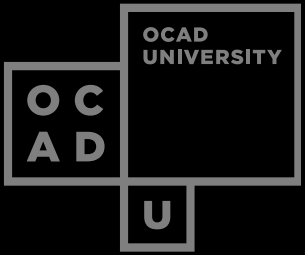
What is foresight?

“the ability to create and sustain a variety of high quality forward views and to apply the emerging insights in organizationally useful ways... to detect adverse conditions, guide policy, shape strategy; to explore new markets, products & services.”

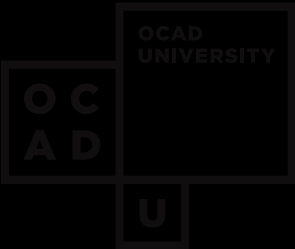
—Richard Slaughter, 1999

“A systematic, participatory, future intelligence gathering,...**vision-building** process aimed at present-day decisions & mobilising joint actions”

—EC FOREN project



sLab & SFI design+foresight methodology



Making strange

Making strange

Making strange (приём остранения)

—Viktor Shklovsky, 1917

Alienation effect (Verfremdungseffekt)

—Bertold Brecht

“Making the strange familiar,
and the familiar strange”

—Stuart Brand, founder of GBN and Long Now Foundation

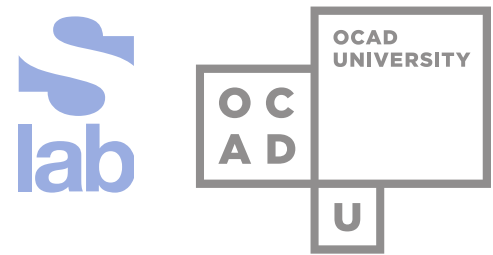
Failing better

“All of old. Nothing else ever.
Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter.
Try again. Fail again. Fail better.”

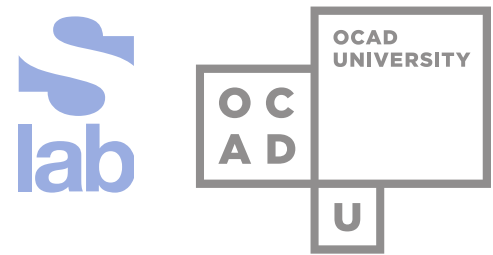
—Samuel Beckett, *Worstward Ho*



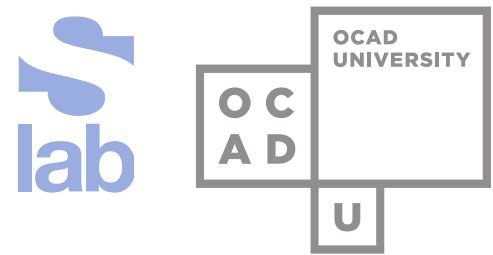
Design+Foresight at OCAD U
Tangible Futures, Design Fictions
in Helen Kerr’s Leading Innovation, 2012



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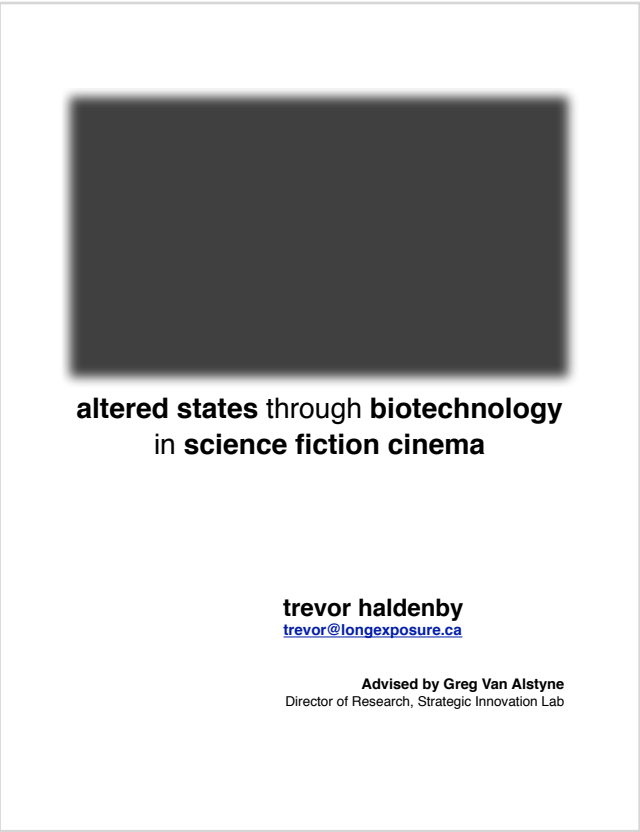


Figure 13: A Gephi visualization depicting the network of interactions on Twitter
between ByoLogyc staff (grey), ByoLogyc websites (blue), EXE (red),
and ZED.TO participants (green). (2012) ³²

Critical Design

“Use of speculative design proposals to challenge narrow assumptions, preconceptions and givens about the role products play in everyday life...”

Dunne & Raby. <http://www.dunneandraby.co.uk/content/bydandr/13/0>

Design Fiction

“The deliberate use of diegetic prototypes to suspend disbelief about change”

Bruce Sterling. [@bruces](#) quoted in [@futuryst](#) Stuart Candy [29 Jan](#), 2012

Science Fiction Prototyping

“What if we could use stories, movies and comics as a kind of tool to explore the real world implications and uses of future technologies today?”

Brian David Johnson (2011). *Science fiction prototyping: designing the future with science fiction*. Morgan & Claypool.

Q: What comes from risk+design+foresight?

A: Overcoming hype; crossing the chasm

Q: What comes from risk+design+foresight?

A: Social innovation

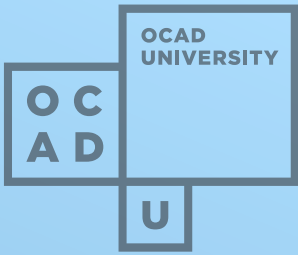
“Optimism is a moral choice, it’s a business choice... which is a healthy progression for change”

@chelseaclinton @clintonfdn #cgi2014

Q: What comes from risk+design+foresight?

A: “Risk design” as strategy

“By soliciting risks and handling them ostentatiously yet seemingly effortlessly, [Norman Foster’s “Gherkin” building] accrued capital for the clients and the City of London, for the architects and their consultants—and also for **design as a risk management practice.** With each solicitation, gain, & management of risk, the design acquired agency by becoming a stronger branding instrument.”



Many thanks

Greg Van Alstyne
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